WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for maintaining state information in a speech decoder which experiences an unavailability of packets containing coded speech information from a speech encoder, the state information of the decoder reflecting received encoded speech information, the method comprising the steps of:

decoding received packets to form a speech signal;

determining that one or more packets are not available at the decoder;

synthesizing a speech signal corresponding to the unavailable packets;

encoding the synthesized speech signal; and

providing signals reflecting the encoded synthesized speech to the decoder for use in maintaining decoder state information.